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afford great opportunities for selection and choice; and whatever modifications they might require, they are still such as to save much of the labor, that would be required to prepare them wholly from one's own reading and recollection and etymological learning. Much the same may be said of the rich illustrations of words by examples, in Johnson's and Richardson's Dictionaries. These may be greatly abridged, and probably better ones sometimes substituted; but similar examples from the best English writers, illustrating the language as it has existed for centuries past, cannot be spared. It is one of the most effectual means of preserving the beauty and idiomatic purity of the English tongue. Though it is not from a dictionary, as some seem to think, that we are to get a full knowledge of language, yet he must be singularly learned, who has never occasion to resort to it, in order to learn something that he never knew, or to recall what he has forgotten, or to clear up that of which he is doubtful. And though we are no perfectionists, even in regard to that kind of learning whose boundaries seem to be well defined, yet we greet with the highest joy and gratitude, those who approximate most nearly to what we deem perfection in an arduous literary undertaking.

ART. IX. — *The Evidences of the Genuineness of the Gospels*. By ANDREWS NORTON. Vol. I. Boston; American Stationers' Company. John B. Russell. 1837. 8vo. pp. xviii., 248, ccxc.

MORAL evidence is of two kinds, — that of testimony, and that of circumstances. Not that the two are always, or indeed often, entirely distinct each from the other; for the circumstances on which a train of evidence is based, must for the most part rest on testimony, while testimony often bears to be interpreted as the type of some peculiar and decisive posture of circumstances. But, in the form in which evidence is applied to the establishment of any point of doubt or difficulty, there is always room for this division. We found our decision either simply on the assertion of competent witnesses, or else on the tacit documents presented by well-ascertained phenom-

ena, which stand in the relation of cause, effect, or necessary concomitant, with one or the other side of the question at issue. The latter, or circumstantial evidence, is by far the strongest, nay, occupies nearly the same position in historical and moral inquiries, which in the exact sciences is filled by mathematical demonstration. It is the testimony of Providence, and cannot lie. It may indeed be rashly inferred and applied ; voiceless circumstances may be tortured into speech ; but, where the language is unforced and genuine, the proof derived from it is as sure as the laws of the divine administration are unchangeable. The evidence of mere testimony, on the other hand, in moral reasoning, corresponds with hypothesis in the exact sciences. It establishes only a degree of probability, varying indefinitely with the number and credibility of the witnesses ; nor can it be said to approach to certainty, so long as a single opposing testimony can be cited. It may be safely relied on with regard to events of recent occurrence and extensive notoriety, or where the witnesses are well known to be keen-sighted, disinterested, and trustworthy ; but it loses its worth and its power of conviction with every darkening degree of obscurity and antiquity in the events to which it is applied, and with every shade of ignorance, doubt, or suspicion, that may rest upon the competency or honesty of the witnesses. It gains strength only by the accumulation of independent testimonies ; and this accumulation must be made up entirely of sound and firm materials, a single dubious, irrelevant, or objectionable testimony going far towards invalidating the whole body of proof of which it forms a part.

It has been hitherto mainly by the evidence of testimony, that Christian writers have attempted to substantiate the genuineness of our canonical Gospels. This mode of proof, in different hands, has been liable to two opposite and equally fatal objections. Some, unwilling to adduce any but the most unexceptionable witnesses, have cited too few (as compared with the multitude, which in such a case might reasonably be expected,) to create even a high degree of probability in favor of the positions, to which they testify. Others (like Less and Lardner) have weakened the cause they aimed to serve, by the heterogeneous combination of real and supposed, genuine and spurious, competent and untrustworthy testimonies. They have made vast and precious accumulations of

materials for Christian evidence ; but by the form, or rather by the formless chaos, in which they have presented these materials, and by the stress, which they often place on obscure and doubtful testimony, their works are perhaps as well adapted to cherish skepticism in some minds, as to confirm faith in others.

Mr. Norton, in the work under review, has made, so far as we know, the first essay to prove, solely by circumstantial evidence, the genuineness of the Gospels. This mode of reasoning has, we are well aware, been long and successfully employed with regard to the authenticity of the Gospel history ; but we apprehend that its application to the critical question, whether our Gospels were indubitably the works of their reputed authors, has never before been attempted. This volume then, though its materials have always been the property of the Christian world, is, in its aim and structure, original and unique. The writer rejects all witnesses, whose testimony lies open to any rational objection, as also all those, who may be regarded as insulated and irresponsible, who speak for themselves alone, whose assertions cannot be viewed as the voice of an age or a community, or as indubitable indications of some peculiar and pertinent posture of circumstances or course of events. By this expurgating process, he admits so few witnesses upon the stand, that, in the mere form of independent and unconnected testimony, their voices would be of little weight, and the argument founded upon them unsubstantial and vague. But he connects each individual testimony with the circumstances under which it is given, with the position and relations of its author, with the light cast from extraneous sources upon his fidelity and competency, and with the general features of the times as made known on unquestionable authority ; and on all these points he never assumes the postulates of those, whose sentiments coincide with his own, but uniformly takes his departure from the admissions of his opponents. He likewise so arranges and confronts his few select witnesses, as to make them mutually illustrate and confirm each other's testimony. And then he fortifies them on every hand by the strongest considerations of intrinsic probability, grounded on the results of uniform experience, and the recognised laws of human belief and conduct. He has thus constructed, on fewer and simpler data than have ever before been deemed competent,

a fabric of adamantine firmness. He has placed beyond dispute the authorship of our canonical Gospels ; and, this point being established, little is left for the defender of the Christian faith to do ; for, if our Gospels were written by the men whose names they bear, the authenticity of their records and the divine mission of their great teacher hardly need the show of argument.

In the light, in which we have presented it, the work before us not only demands a grateful welcome from the theological reviewer ; but may claim respectful notice from a merely literary journal, as a rare specimen of erudite archæological research, acute criticism, and invincible argument, while, did not the magnitude of the subject preclude comment on minor beauties, we might hold forth this volume to our readers as constituting, by its precision, force, and Attic purity of style, a most valuable contribution to the infant literature of the country. For these reasons we offer a hasty sketch of its design, and analysis of its contents, in the unhesitating assurance, that in so doing we shall not be regarded as transgressing our legitimate scope.

Mr. Norton's work is not designed to meet the cavils of the class of men commonly called *infidels*. They, as a body, have been long since driven from the fair field of argument, and have contented themselves with hurling the missiles of ridicule and abuse. But, among professedly Christian theologians, there have recently been propounded and cherished theories, which seem to many of their brethren no less subversive of the foundations of our common faith, than were the unmasked attacks of Hume and Voltaire. The school of critics, to which we refer, at the head of which we must place the name of Eichhorn, is very numerous in Germany, has found in England an able expositor and defender in Bishop Marsh, and is not without its disciples in this country. By the authors of this school, the Gospel of John is for the most part admitted as genuine, or, at least, its genuineness is left open for discussion. Their favorite theory relates only to the first three Gospels ; and, though it admits that these might have been *in a certain sense* the works of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, it goes the whole length of denying, that, as transmitted to us, they were their *original, independent, and uncorrupted* compositions. We quote, as condensed by Mr.

Norton, an outline of the scheme elaborated by Eichhorn and Marsh.

“ There was very early in existence a short historical sketch of the life of Christ, which may be called the Original Gospel. This was, probably, provided for the use of those assistants of the apostles in the work of teaching Christianity, who had not themselves seen the actions and heard the discourses of Christ. It was however but ‘*a rough sketch, a brief and imperfect account, without historical plan or methodical arrangement.*’ In this respect it was, according to Eichhorn, very different from our four Gospels. ‘ These present no rough sketch, such as we must suppose the first essay upon the life of Jesus to have been ; but, on the contrary, are works written with art and labor, and contain portions of his life, of which no mention was made in the first preaching of Christianity.’ This Original Gospel was the basis both of the earlier gospels used during the first two centuries, and of the first three of our present Gospels, namely, those of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, by which those earlier Gospels were finally superseded. The earlier gospels retained more or less of the rudeness and incompleteness of the Original Gospel.

“ But they very soon fell into the hands of those who undertook to supply their defects and incompleteness, both in the general compass of the history, and in the narration of particular events. Not content with a life of Jesus, which, like the Gospel of the Hebrews and those of Marcion and Tatian, commenced with his public appearance, there were those who early prefixed to the Memoirs used by Justin Martyr, and to the gospel of Cerinthus, an account of his descent, his birth, and the period of his youth. In like manner, we find, upon comparing together, in parallel passages, the remaining fragments of these Gospels, that they were receiving continual accessions. * * * * By these continual accessions, the original text of the life of Jesus was lost in a mass of additions, so that its words appeared among them but as insulated fragments. Of this any one may satisfy himself from the account of the baptism of Jesus, which was compiled out of various gospels. The necessary consequence was, that at last truth and falsehood, authentic and fabulous narratives, or such, at least, as through long tradition had become disfigured and falsified, were brought together promiscuously. The longer these narratives passed from mouth to mouth, the more uncertain and disfigured they would become. At last, at the end of the second and the beginning of the third century, in order, as far as might be, to preserve the true accounts concerning the life of

Jesus, and to deliver them to posterity as free from error as possible, the Church, out of the many gospels which were extant, selected four, which had the greatest marks of credibility, and the necessary completeness for common use. There are no traces of our present Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, before the end of the second and the beginning of the third century. Irenæus, about the year 202, first speaks decisively of four Gospels, and imagines all sorts of reasons for this particular number; and Clement of Alexandria, about the year 216, labored to collect divers accounts concerning the origin of these four Gospels, in order to prove that these alone should be acknowledged as authentic. From these facts, it is evident, that first, about the end of the second, and the beginning of the third century, the Church labored to establish the universal authority of these four Gospels, which were in existence before, if not altogether in their present form, yet in most respects such as we now have them, and to procure their general reception in the Church, with the suppression of all other gospels then extant.

“ ‘Posterity would indeed have been under much greater obligations, if, together with the Gospel of John, the Church had established, by public authority, only the first rough sketch of the life of Jesus, which was given to the earliest missionaries to authenticate their preaching; after separating it from all its additions and augmentations. But this was no longer possible; for there was no copy extant free from all additions, and the critical operation of separating this accessory matter was too difficult for those times.’ ”

“ ‘Many ancient writers of the Church,’ Eichhorn subjoins in a note, ‘doubted the genuineness of many parts of our Gospels; but were prevented from coming to a decision by want of critical skill.’ ” — pp. 9–13.

It is chiefly to establish the uncorrupted genuineness of our present Gospels against objections of this class, that Mr. Norton has prepared the work before us, which, however, as it is in the shape of a positive argument, not of a reply or rejoinder, might be read with no less interest and profit by one whose faith was endangered or shaken by any other influence whatsoever. The propositions necessary to be established, in order to vindicate the authority of the Gospels, both from the attacks of foes and the theories of injudicious friends, are, first, “that *the Gospels remain essentially the same as they were originally composed*”; and, secondly, that they “*have been ascribed to their true authors.*” The circumstantial proof of

these two propositions, constitutes the two main divisions of the work before us ; and the general formula of proof, to which every argument employed is reduced, might be stated as follows ; “The testimony cited could not have been given, or the fact adduced could not have existed, under the well-known and universally admitted circumstances of time and place, had not the proposition now the topic of discussion been true.” We now proceed to give a condensed view of the arguments, by which each of the foregoing propositions is established.

1. That the Gospels remain essentially the same as they were composed, would appear from the present virtual coincidence of all extant manuscripts and versions. There have been collated nearly seven hundred manuscripts of the whole, or of portions, of the Greek text, written in various and distant countries, from the fifth century downward. To these we must add numerous manuscripts of ancient versions in no less than eleven languages, European, Asiatic, and African ; also many manuscripts of the works of early fathers, especially of commentaries, in which the text of the Gospels is expressly quoted. From all these sources may indeed be brought together a vast body of various readings, yet most of them so slight and trivial, that they can be ascribed solely to the common accidents of transcription ; and nine tenths, perhaps we may say ninety-nine hundredths of them, affecting only interchangeable particles, or nearly equivalent inflexions of the same verb. Adopt any one of these manuscripts or versions as the standard text, and the deviations from it, which the others will present, will be neither greater, nor (in proportion to the number collated) more numerous, than are found in the antique copies extant of classic and other authors generally. So far then as the essential coincidence of the sources collated for the text of the Georgics, or of Cicero’s Orations, proves that Virgil’s and Cicero’s works were not made what they are by successive additions and improvements by different hands, but that they remain essentially as they were written, so far do similar premises, with regard to the Gospels, warrant similar conclusions concerning them. From the day that our Gospels existed in any form, they must have been prized and sought ; copies of them would have been taken in every stage of their elaboration ; and these copies could not but have been recopied and perpetuated. It is in the very nature of things impossible, that the fact of this gradual

elaboration should have left no traces in the now extant exemplars of works so widely circulated. It is indeed pretended by Eichhorn, that "the Church," about the end of the second or beginning of the third century, selected from the many Gospels then extant, our canonical four, as the authoritative standards of history and faith. He admits that they had then attained their present size and form. But there was at that time no organized universal church, or general ecclesiastical government, or system of concerted action; nor was there the least approach to any thing of this kind, until the council of Nice in 325. On the other hand, at the date assumed by Eichhorn, Christians were separated by frequent persecutions, by wide and arduous distances, by difference of language, by religious alienations and controversies; and even the schism between the Eastern and Western churches may be traced thus early, the former having already been excommunicated by the Bishop of Rome. Where then was "the Church" universal, which had either the authority to impose, or the submissiveness to receive from any then existing hierarchy, a set of symbolical books to the exclusion of those previously used?

To the exclusion of those previously used, we say; for no one pretends that Christians in general were without some record of their Master's life. In fact, there is abundant proof that *Gospels*, genuine or spurious, were in current use in every Christian community. There must have been, on the lowest possible estimate, at least three millions of Christians at the end of the second century. Allowing only a copy of a single Gospel to every fifty souls, there were then extant, and scattered over the then known world, sixty thousand copies of Gospels. If of other than our present Gospels, on Eichhorn's hypothesis, they must have been taken by ecclesiastical authority out of the hands of the everywhere-scattered and many-tongued owners, and so generally destroyed as to prevent their reproduction by copyists,* and in their place must have been substituted, by the same authority, copies, in every

* The apocryphal Gospels, which have been recently, and from questionable motives, brought from the dust of antiquarian shelves into popular circulation, need not be considered in this connexion; for their comparatively recent origin, and the entire falsity of the pretence that they ever had reception or authority in the church, are at once well known to the veriest tyros, and admitted by the wildest visionaries in biblical criticism.

language, of our present Gospels ; and all this must have taken place among orthodox and heretics, in the East and in the West, so quietly and with so little opposition, as to leave no trace in the history of the times, as to be entirely forgotten in the next century, nay, more, as to enable Irenæus, (who died in 202, and must have lived in the very days of this overturn,) in writing against heretics, with whom he must have been on his guard against arrogant assumptions, to refer to our present Gospels as the only ones that had ever been in existence, and as then retaining their original form. *Credat Judæus*. But if the Gospels extant at the end of the second century, to the general reception and acknowledged authority of which we have the testimony of Irenæus, were the same Gospels that we now have, we can account for the footing which they then held in the Christian community, only by assigning to the same identical Gospels a date so much earlier, as to throw back their authorship, in their present form, upon the age of their reputed authors, and thus to settle the question of their integrity.

These considerations may be fortified by numerous collateral arguments. And foremost among these we may place the reverence with which the Gospels were uniformly regarded by the early Christians. There is hardly an ecclesiastical father, who does not bear ample testimony to as general and implicit a veneration for these records, as is now entertained for them by a vast majority of private believers. This reverence, in these latter days, might be grounded on ignorance ; but it could not have been so at a period when all the circumstances connected with the authorship of the Gospels were within the easy reach of the curious and skeptical. Books which were undergoing a constant process of interpolation and change, at the pleasure of every transcriber, could not have fastened themselves so strongly on the devout veneration of the pious ; nor, on the other hand, would piety have permitted a process thus sacrilegious, on books that had once gained so strong a hold on the reverence of the Christian community. In fact, the fathers are not silent with regard to the interpolation of their sacred records ; but express themselves with the most devout horror concerning so foul a sin, which they could not have done, had these very books been the result of successive interpolations. In fine, the reverence, which they uniformly manifest for the Gospels, is of a kind and degree, which, in

accordance with the laws of mind, can be accounted for only by supposing these narratives the uncorrupted works of Apostles and primitive disciples.

Again, there is in the Gospels themselves, abundant internal evidence, that they were the independent works, each of a distinct author.

“ Each Gospel is distinguished from the others, by individual peculiarities in the use of language, and other characteristics exclusively its own. Any one familiar with the originals, perceives, for instance, that Mark, is a writer less acquainted with the Greek language than Luke, and having less command of proper expression. His style is, in consequence, more affected by the idiom of the Hebrew, more harsh, more unformed, more barbarous, in the technical sense of that word. If you were to transfer into Luke’s Gospel a chapter from that of Mark, every critic would at once perceive its dissimilitude to the general style of the former. The difference would be still more remarkable, if you were to insert a portion from Mark in John’s Gospel. But the very distinctive character of the style of the Gospels generally, and the peculiar character of each Gospel, are irreconcilable with the notion, that they have been brought to their present state by additions and alterations of successive copiers. A diversity of hands would have produced in each Gospel a diversity of style and character. Instead of the uniformity that now appears, the modes of conception and expression would have been inconsistent and vacillating.” — pp. 78, 79.

But, waving considerations growing out of each evangelist’s individuality of style, and the well-known difficulty of imitating another’s style so closely that the difference of hands cannot be traced, there is yet an historical circumstance, which would have rendered the composition of the entire Gospels, or the interpolation of any portions of them, at a later than their usually assigned date, peculiarly impracticable. The Gospels are written throughout in Hellenistic Greek, a dialect created by the transfusion of Hebrew idioms into the Greek, and which could therefore have been written by none but native or naturalized Jews. Now it is through the Gentile part of the Church, that the Gospels have been transmitted to us ; and, after the death of the Apostles and the destruction of Jerusalem, there was an entire separation and bitter enmity between the Jewish and Gentile converts. If, then, the Gentiles received their Gospels from the Jews, it

must have been at a date not much subsequent to that, at which their authorship is usually fixed. And if the Gospels were afterwards interpolated, it must have been by Gentile transcribers, who were generally ignorant (as Origen complains) of Hebrew, and who yet were able to give to their Greek so Hebraistic a savour, as to render it undistinguishable from that of men, who were by birth or education Hebrews of the Hebrews. The idea of such interpolation bears absurdity on its very face.

Once more, the Gospels contain no anachronisms ; and the whole history of fiction and of literary imposture shows us, how almost absolutely impossible it is for the most skilful and intelligent author, who takes his stand in a different age from his own, to avoid anachronisms. Even Eichhorn admits, (in a series of remarks on the records of the first three evangelists,) that "every thing in their narratives corresponds to the age in which they lived and wrote, and to the circumstances in which we must believe them to have been placed." This remark is unquestionably true ; but without a miracle it could not have been true, had facts accorded with its author's hypothesis of the gradual augmentation of the Gospels by successive hands.

The following is also a strong point, and strongly stated.

"The character and actions of Jesus Christ, as exhibited in the Gospels, are peculiar and extraordinary beyond all example. They distinguish him, in a most remarkable manner, from all other men. They display the highest moral sublimity. We perceive, throughout, an ultimate purpose of the most extensive benevolence. But this character of Christ, which appears in the Gospels, is exhibited with perfect consistency. Whatever he is represented as saying or doing, corresponds to the fact or the conception, — call it which we will, — that he was a teacher sent from God, endued with the highest powers, and intrusted with the most important office, ever exercised upon earth. The different parts of each Gospel harmonize together. Now let any one consider, how unlikely it is that we should have found this consistency in the representation of Christ, if the Gospels had been in great part the work of inconsiderate or presumptuous copiers ; or if they had consisted, in great part, of a collection of traditionary stories ; and especially if these stories had been, as some have imagined, either fabulous accounts of miracles, or narratives having a foundation in truth, but corresponding so little to the real fact, as to have assumed a miraculous character,

which there was nothing in the fact itself to justify. It is incredible, that under such circumstances there should be the consistency, which now appears in the Gospels. On the contrary, we might expect to find in them stories, of a kind similar to those extant in certain writings, that have been called apocryphal gospels; which betray their falsehood at first view, by their incongruity with the character and actions of our Saviour, as displayed by the evangelists. We shall have occasion to notice them somewhat more particularly hereafter. Every one acquainted with the stories referred to, must perceive and acknowledge their striking dissimilitude to the narratives of the Gospels. A dissimilitude of the same kind would have existed between different parts of the Gospels, if they had grown, as has been imagined, to their present form, by a gradual contribution of traditional tales. On the contrary, their consistency in the representation of our Saviour is one among the many proofs, that they have been preserved essentially as they were first written." — pp. 86 – 88.

A part of the considerations which have been adduced, apply to St. Matthew's Gospel, only from the date of its translation into the Greek. But that the Hebrew exemplar, from which this translation was made, had suffered little or no corruption or augmentation, we may infer from the general uniformity and consistency of style, from the absence of all anachronisms, from the strongly marked and pervading individuality of the work, and from its coincidence in the main with the other three Gospels, to which all the foregoing arguments apply with full force.

2. The second part of the volume before us is devoted to the evidence, that the Gospels have been attributed to their true authors. Mr. Norton first proves, by authorities beyond dispute or objection, that, during the last quarter of the second century, our four Gospels were attributed to the writers whose names they now bear. The witnesses to this fact are not to be regarded in the same light with those, who might have given similar testimony concerning Horace or Tacitus. The fathers of the Church were official personages; they speak in the name, and are to be regarded as the representatives of their fellow-Christians. The fulness and diversity of the attestations, which they have left us, prove, therefore, beyond a question, that, at the close of the second century, Gospels, essentially the same with our present Gospels, were received throughout the Church, as the works of Matthew,

Mark, Luke, and John. There is earlier testimony bearing on the same point ; but it is objected to. Our author does not, therefore, in the first instance, avail himself of it. But he takes his stand on the ground conceded by his opponents, and proves that these testimonies could not have been given, at the time when, and in the circumstances under which they were given, had not Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John written the Gospels that bear their respective names.

Now Christians at the period in question were fully able to determine, whether the Gospels were genuine or not. Irenæus, who died in 202, informs us, that he had listened to the preaching of Polycarp, a disciple of St. John. Only a single link then was needed, to connect the old men of his day with the apostolic age. Had the Gospels been written at a later date, or by different authors, than we now suppose, there would have been those living, who could have traced them to their spurious origin, or could, at least, have borne the negative testimony, that they had heard of no such books, as having emanated from the Apostolic family. The absence of all such testimony is positive proof, that the facts included in the genuineness of the Gospels were within the distinct knowledge of Irenæus and his contemporaries.

In estimating the weight of the foregoing consideration, we must remember, that the question of the genuineness of the Gospels could not, at that early age, have been a matter of indifference. Christians were then obliged for their religion's sake to sunder numerous social ties, to discharge peculiar and arduous duties, to lead lives of the strictest self-denial, and to encounter enmity and persecution. They constantly appeal to the Gospels, as the sole authoritative records of the facts and motives, by which they were induced to do and suffer what they did and suffered. Such duties as they discharged, and such sacrifices as they made, are not wont to be called forth by a known imposture, or a tale of doubtful origin. Their conduct can be accounted for, only by supposing that they were acquainted with the history of the books, which armed them for effort and endurance, that they "knew that the records were true."

Once more, the connexion of the Gospels with the other universally received books of the New Testament, confirms their genuineness. With regard to eleven of these books, viz. the Acts of the Apostles and ten of St. Paul's Epistles,

we have evidence of a peculiar kind, arising from the undesigned coincidences, so admirably drawn forth in Paley's "*Horæ Paulinæ*." Now, if these eleven books are proved genuine, it will seem improbable that spurious books should have gained equal or superior credit with the Christian community. The genuineness of a part is strong presumptive evidence of that of the whole.

The discrepancies between the several Gospels add great weight to the argument in favor of their genuineness. These discrepancies were observed by the fathers, and occasioned them (especially Origen) very great perplexity. But they never attempted to relieve themselves of their difficulties by casting doubts upon the authority of either record; a fact which proves incontestably, that the origin of each of the Gospels was too well known to be gainsaid. In fact, no other hypothesis, but that the four all proceeded from the highest authority, can account for their general reception as possessed of equal claims to credence and veneration. Had one been first received, the discrepancies between the others and it, would have kept them in disesteem; or, had all four been simultaneously thrown upon the Christian community, their mutual contradictions, apparent and real, would have cast them into common discredit and oblivion. But, if the authorship of the Gospels was known, then the authority of the writers would have overborne, as it did, the doubts which seemingly inconsistent accounts might have cast upon the sacred narratives.

With regard to the first three Gospels, our author shows very lucidly, that their peculiar phenomena of coincidence and discrepancy can be accounted for on no other ground, than that of their genuineness.

Mr. Norton's argument is complete and conclusive, without the testimony of Justin Martyr; and Justin Martyr is put out of court by the critics of Eichhorn's school, as having used and quoted other Memoirs than our present Gospels. But Mr. Norton, after having shown that he can well dispense with this witness, vindicates his right to testify to the point at issue, and exhibits the clearness, fulness, and weight of his testimony, in a chapter of great acumen and power.

A short chapter follows, giving the testimony of Papias (as transmitted by Eusebius) to the genuineness of Matthew's and Mark's Gospels, and of Luke to that of his own in the poem to his "*Acts of the Apostles*."

Mr. Norton lays no stress on any arguments drawn from the writings commonly attributed to the apostolic fathers. In those writings, there are many things that accord with, and none that militate against, the contents of our canonical Gospels. But they contain no direct and formal quotations from our evangelists. Supposing them genuine, the facts and sayings, which they cite from the life of Jesus, might have been learned by oral communication, and, in that case, though they would do much towards confirming the authenticity, they would bear only indirectly upon the genuineness of the Gospels. But most of these writings must, by impartial criticism, be referred to an age, which furnishes us a competent number of direct and sufficient witnesses, and can therefore add but little to the weight of evidence.

We have thus given a cursory and imperfect outline of Mr. Norton's course of argument, avoiding, as far as possible, theological technicalities, and confining ourselves to considerations, that can be appreciated by the general scholar, no less than by the professed critic. The notes to this work form a large and well-arranged digest of subsidiary matter, relating to the present text of the New Testament, the theories that have been framed to account for the origin of the first three Gospels, Justin Martyr's Quotations, and the genuineness and worth of the writings ascribed to the apostolic fathers. Our limits will hardly permit us to give any account or analysis of these notes ; and this we the less regret, as they are for the most part strictly critical in their character, and also involve several points of controversy, which it would be wide of our scope to discuss, and the settlement of which affects but indirectly the argument constituting the body of the work. The remarks in Note A., on the systematic classification of the copies of the New Testament into three *Recensions*, adopted by Griesbach and others, will doubtless seem to many readers to rest on less substantial grounds, than those which form the basis of the classification. For ourselves, we have been convinced by the note, that Griesbach pushed his idea of the *Recensions* too far, used extravagant language concerning it, and tortured into its defence many irrelevant facts and phenomena ; but, with all the allowance which these considerations compel us to make, we cannot but think, that there yet remain sound and solid arguments in favor of the classification. In Note D., "on the Origin of the Correspondences

among the first three Gospels," Mr. Norton passes in review all the principal theories of which these books have been the subject, gives us a thorough refutation of Eichhorn's hypothesis concerning them, and proves that their peculiar phenomena can be accounted for only by supposing them the original works of independent authors. To the critical scholar, this discussion will constitute one of the most interesting and valuable portions of the volume.

Seldom, perhaps never, has *oil* so well *beaten* been brought into the sanctuary of our faith, as in the work under review. Its preparation was commenced in 1819; and the studies and labors of every succeeding year have contributed to its present completeness and accuracy. The result belies not the time which it has cost. The work cannot but take its stand at once with those of Butler, Paley, and Lardner, among the main pillars and bulwarks of Christianity. Apart from the general service, which it must render to the common cause of our faith, it will perform also a service by no means contemptible for the rising generation of theologians. It will make them cautious and suspicious readers of ultra German theorists. Mr. Norton has in so numerous instances convicted Eichhorn, Stroth, and Credner, of misstatement, inaccuracy, and inconsistency, as fully to convince us, (what indeed we had already suspected with regard to the first-named,) that, while the lightning of their quick-glancing imaginations may often reveal rich veins of truth, and their vast treasuries of learning may enable us to work these veins successfully, yet they can be trusted no farther, than they can be verified.

We hope that we may soon see the remaining volumes of this invaluable work; and will close our grateful notice of the present, by quoting from its Preface the following account of what we are permitted to expect.

"It is my purpose next to show the strong confirmation of the more direct historical evidence, afforded by the manner in which the Gospels were regarded by the early Gnostic heretics; a field which, though not untrodden, has been unexplored; and then, after endeavouring to remove some misapprehensions respecting the historical, to proceed to the collateral evidence for the genuineness of the Gospels. The larger portion of the manuscript of the remainder of the work has been written; but it is yet to be subjected to revision, and, after my past experience, it would be unwise for me to hazard a calculation respecting the

time that may be required to prepare for the public the two volumes which will finish my design. Should life and health be granted me, I shall proceed as I have proposed ; but it should be observed, that this volume is, in its nature, an independent work, and might have been so published, had no others been intended to follow." — p. vii.

ART. X. — 1. *Bibliothèque Américaine, ou Catalogue des Ouvrages relatifs à l'Amérique qui ont paru depuis sa Découverte jusqu'à l'An 1700.* Par H. TERNAUX. Paris. 1837. 8vo. pp. 191.

2. *Voyages, Relations et Mémoires Originaux pour servir à l'Histoire de la Découverte de l'Amérique, publiés pour la première Fois en Français,* par HENRI TERNAUX. 3 tomes. Paris. 1837. 8vo. pp. 227, 162, 335.

THE attention that is now paid on the continent of Europe to the history of this Western World, particularly to its early annals, is as remarkable as it is gratifying. It is a singular but undeniable fact, that, at the present moment, there is a much greater interest felt in this subject by those who speak a foreign tongue, than by those who have a common origin and language with ourselves. We are continually receiving new evidences of this fact, and witnessing new modes in which this interest is manifested. But a short time since, we were favored with a copy of a Prospectus, sent forth by the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries at Copenhagen, in which they propose to publish a collection of the accounts extant in ancient Icelandic manuscripts, relative to voyages of discovery to North America, made by the Scandinavians in the tenth and eleventh centuries ; a work unquestionably of the greatest importance, inasmuch as it professes to comprise testimony, most authentic and irrefragable, to the fact that the northern part of this continent was actually discovered by the Northmen towards the close of the tenth century, and repeatedly visited by them from that time down to the fourteenth. The work is to consist of the ancient Sagas in the original Icelandic, (accompanied with Danish and Latin translations,) some of which are now for the first time published from manuscripts recently discovered in the public libraries of